

# Spirituality of the Liturgy of the Hours

Seven times a Day I will PRAISE You!  
(Ps. 119:164)

Pray always without becoming weary.  
(Lk 18:1)

# A Prayer of Praise

# A Prayer of Praise

- LOTH is a Liturgy of Praise.
- It moves from saying the Psalms to Praise:
  - Praise of God for who He is in Himself
  - Act of Praise for all God has done – the wonders of God.
- The Glory Be after each psalm is a praise for God as God.

# Through all the Ages

- The LOTH knows of no insignificant days of our lives.
  - Every instant is holy and has purpose in God's purpose.
- The LOTH punctuates the Day with prayer and praise to God.
- This way the day becomes sanctified (set apart).
- **The LOTH excites in us that down through the ages the Church is all about the Praise of God. Seven times a day the Lord is praised.**

# On earth as it is in Heaven!

- LOTH is an echoing of praise – when praying it, we echo what is happening in heaven.
- It is an echoing of Christ's praise of the Father; that is what we are doing.
- Psalms are used in this praise as they were used by Jesus who's parents taught them to Him.

PRAISE IS GIVEN TO THE FATHER THROUGH  
THE SON BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

- This is the structure of the LOTH => ad (to), per (through), in (by), cum (with)
- These prepositions are directional.
- The praise of God is DOXOLOGICAL.
- It is the impulse of the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit that help us to pray.

# Review

- What do we achieve by praying LOTH? The Praise of God!
- Prayer is on two levels:
  - Praise (Psalm 103) where we praise God for who God is in Himself
  - Thanks (Psalm 104) Praise of God for what he has done on our behalf.

# A Dialogical Prayer

Prayer with direction!



# LOTH: Directional Prayer

- When praying the LOTH, God descends and we ascend
- LOTH responds to God's initiative
- LOTH is a means to an end (Praise of God); yet LOTH is not an end in itself.
- LOTH is a privileged means to end (Praise of God).
- LOTH helps to turn us out of ourselves and not toward sin.

# ANABATIC PRAYER

- This is Ascending Prayer – it ascends from us to God
- Two Levels of this prayer
  - Created Grace (us)
  - Uncreated grace (God)
- LOTH moves us to God. LOTH raises us beyond ourselves. LOTH has to move us from created to uncreated.
- To do this an act of the will is needed: God, come to my assistance... The sign of the cross is also made for this reason.
- We are dependent on uncreated grace (God); created grace (us) is only as strong as its movement to uncreated grace (God). God chooses to redeem us collectively.

# KATABATIC PRAYER

- This is descending prayer. I have to believe that God listens to my prayer; that it is not just empty words.
- God loves us (see Isaiah 43). What God creates, God sustains.
- Dialogical prayer is attained when there is both katabatic and anabatic prayer.
- This is based on the story of Jacob's ladder in Genesis 28:11-19 with the image of the angels ascending and descending. This is renewed with the LOTH. The movement to God is willed by God. God wills a relationship with us and Him.

## Review of Types of directional prayer

- Katabatic is descending prayer where God, who is uncreated grace, saves us, who are created grace.
  - See Psalm 89 and Exodus 15.
- Anabatic is ascending prayer.
  - It is seen, for example, in Psalm 71:23 and in Psalm 108:2, where praise and instruments awaken the dawn.

# TIME and PRAYER

The sanctification of time as the  
outcome of praying the LOTH

# Prayer, Time, and Memory

- LOTH is a way of approaching God through dialogical prayer (ascending and descending).
- LOTH is a prayer of waiting: waiting for the Return of Jesus (time).
- How do we keep the memory of Jesus alive? This is a primary purpose of Mass, the sacraments, and LOTH.
  - The ultimate end of LOTH is the Beatific vision.
    - LOTH ceases at that point.

# EIGHT REALITIES

1. **ALL PRAYER IS SITUATED BETWEEN THE TWO PARUSIA OF THE LORD. (Think Advent)**
  - Utilize the time of Grace; (see 2 Cor 6:2 – the present now; Heb 4:7 – Harden Hearts)
  - Each moment of the day is grace; this moment is offered in prayer. Prayer utilizes each moment of grace.
  - LOTH formalizes all of the other moments of prayer during the day.
  - LOTH is a method, a means, and forum.
  - LOTH is provisional in nature; **NO TIME IS UNIMPORTANT.**

# EIGHT REALITIES

## **2. IT IS A TIME OF WAITING BETWEEN PARUSIA**

- Think of John's image of Christ as the bridegroom
- Prayer is abiding with the bridegroom after the bridegroom's departure in hopeful expectation of Jesus' return. This leads to a yearning/desire.
- Attribute of desire – desirous of the return of the bridegroom.
- **Time is given to us by God on the condition that He can take it back at anytime.**
- **With the LOTH, there are 7 periods of time for this yearning and desire to be expressed.**



# Eight Realities

3. **LOTH TAKES THE PRESENT SERIOUSLY; BUT FOR THE SAKE OF THE COMING FUTURE**
  - LOTH sees time as eschatological. It is a tool to get us to where we need to be (eternity with the Father).
  - All time belongs to God!

# EIGHT REALITIES

## 4. LUKE 21:36 – BE VIGILANT

- LOTH is Watching and Praying; it is a way to keep watch and to pray. Christian prayer is prayer to watch for the Lord to come.
- LOTH is a means to an end. It is a formula of prayer.
- LOTH is prayer only when being (us) seeks Being (God)
- Watchful for the Lord's return.

# Eight Realities

- 5. MK 13:32 – PRAYER MUST BECOME CONTEMPLATION AND SO BECOME ABLE TO REMAIN WITH JESUS IN A STATE OF NOT KNOWING.**
- LOTH allows us to contemplate the day.
  - We must spend our lives and be spent without the assurance of being able to reap the rewards of our investment.
  - LOTH is an exercise by which prayer becomes contemplative.
    - Goal – to be hidden in God.
    - Did you give glory to God? – Hidden in the Life of Christ
    - LOTH focuses us on the Creator – we must be hidden in Christ

# EIGHT REALITIES

- 6. LOTH IS TENTATIVE** (provisional) **AND**  
**CONTINGENT** (dependent on what may happen).
- Did you pray LOTH?
  - Am I closer to God tonight than last night?

# EIGHT REALITIES

- 7. WATCHING THEREFORE INVOLVES THROUGH PRAYER AN ELEMENT OF DECISION WHICH IS VITAL TO CHRISTIAN PRAYER. IT IS A FORM OF STRAIGHT FORWARD FAITHFULNESS.**
- LOTH assists us on how to move closer to Christ and involves an element of decision.
  - Elements of Silence are moments of decision – What did the psalm challenge me to do?
  - Silence is a reality!

# EIGHT REALITIES

## 8. **LOTH IS JOINING IN ON THE EMMAUS WALK**

- Yearning for the future becomes inflamed with fire (renewed).
- We want a vision of Jesus.
- God never abandons His people; God sustains what He creates.
- LOTH is a way to keep watchful unto the Lord.
- LOTH sees time as a grace bestowed by God; we give thanks for this praise.
- LOTH is praise and thanksgiving for the grace given.

# REVEIW

- How is LOTH prayer?
- How do prayer, time, and memory play a part in understanding the purpose of the LOTH? Think of the eight realities discussed and how they touch on each.

Themes in each of the hours



# A time for yearning

- There are 7 periods of time for the yearning and desire of the return of the Lord to be expressed.
- This is the purpose of the Liturgy of the Hours.
- It helps us to take the present seriously, but for the sake of the coming future.
- It see all time as geared to the return of the Lord.
- The Liturgy of the Hours is a tool that helps us get to where we need to be.
- It allows us to see that all time belongs to God.

# Sanctify the Day

- The Liturgy of the Church is how the Church goes about sanctifying the day and thus time.
- Liturgy includes the Mass, the Sacraments, and the Liturgy of the Hours
- The Christian Day revolves around the Eucharist. It is the “source and summit” of the day. It is the sacrifice of the Lord that makes the day holy.
- The Mass is Liturgical prayer (public) that offers praise and thanksgiving to the Lord for the gift of salvation: our Redemption.

# The Liturgy of the Hours sanctifies the day

- The day is also made holy through the Liturgy of the Hours. Here the call to pray seven times as stated in Psalm 119:164 is fulfilled.
- Just as the Mass is a prayer of praise and thanksgiving; so the “Hours” are a continuation of that praise and thanksgiving.
- This way the “Hours” are built around the celebration of the Mass; each has its own theme.
- The praise and thanksgiving are spread throughout the day so as to “Make Holy the Whole Day”.

# Sanctification of time and people

- The celebration of the “hours” and the Mass bring about the sanctification of the Church and the time within which we exist.
- “Recognizing the natural rhythms of the day the church transforms this reality into redemptive moments, drawing it in as it were to the mystery of Christ who spans all time.” (study guide to LOTH)
- The Constitution on the Liturgy states: “By tradition going back to early Christian times, the Divine Office is devised so that the whole course of the day and night is made holy by the praises of God (CSL 84).”
- The celebration of the “Hours” follows the flow of the liturgical year, gradually unfolding God’s mystery of salvation, hidden for all times in the person of Christ.

# Seven times a day I will praise you

1. Office of Readings (Matins)
2. Morning Prayer (Lauds)
3. Midmorning Prayer (terce)
4. Midday Prayer (sext)
5. Midafternoon Prayer (none)
6. Evening Prayer (vespers)
7. Night Prayer (compline)

# VIGILS/MATINS

- Vigils, the first prayer of the day, is derived from the Latin word for *vigilare*, meaning to be watchful, vigilant, alert.
- It is prayed during the midnight hours.
- Vigils is considered a night prayer and reminds the person praying to be ever watchful and prepared for God's coming.
- This period of silence during the night is a time for a person praying to seek inner quiet, to be prepared for the coming of Jesus and the arrival of a new day.

# Morning Prayer

- The sanctification of the day begins with Morning Prayer. This prayer should be said as the first of the day.
- This is a prayer of praise (the meaning of Lauds).
- This prayer is one that encourages us to start the day acknowledging that God is God and worthy of thanks and praise.
- It is a time to offer or consecrate the day to God.
- Morning Prayer anticipates fullness of Christ in the spirit of the Old Testament (thus the use of Old Testament canticles for Morning Prayer).

# Morning:

## The hour of the Resurrection

- One of the themes of morning prayer is the Resurrection of Jesus who is the LIGHT of the World.
- Thus as St. Cyprian states: “there should be prayer in the morning, so that the resurrection of the Lord may be celebrated by morning prayer.
- It is a good way to prepare for Mass: thus, it is preferable to be prayed before the Mass for the day.



# Daytime Prayer

- The tradition associated with this prayer stems from the Bible. Examples of prayer being offered at the third (9:00), sixth (12:00) and ninth hour (3:00) supply the groundwork for Daytime Prayer.
- The theme of work and God's will is what underlie these hours.
- The theme of this prayer is God's will. Its purpose is to recall to our minds that whatever our work may be, we are committed to following God's will in imitation of Jesus who became obedient even to death on a cross.

# TERCE: the third hour

- Terce, the Latin word for the third hour of the day, originated in Roman times when the day was divided into twelve hours.
- Day began at sunrise so the third hour coincides approximately with 9 am.
- Since Jesus was condemned to death at this hour, it recalls the beginning of his walk to Calvary.
- Also, the Holy Spirit came upon the Church at this hour on the first Pentecost (Acts 2:15).

# SEXT: the sixth hour

- Sext, the sixth hour in Roman time, is considered to be 12 noon in modern times.
- It is a time to be quiet and present to ourselves in order to combat the "noonday demon," that is, the temptation to get preoccupied with ambitions of daily life while forgetting God.
- It also recalls the hour of the start of Jesus' crucifixion.

# NONE: the ninth hour

- None was the ninth hour in Roman time which is about 3 pm on our time.
- At this time of the day it is appropriate to reflect upon all things as passing, particularly our own passing from life to death and from death to new life.
- In reflecting on our own death we are also reminded of the death of Jesus, for this was the hour of his death.

# Psalm 119: the daytime psalm

- This is the longest psalm in the book of psalms. It is used in daytime prayer because of its theme of God's will.
- The use of many synonyms for this abound in this psalm: law, precepts, commands, decrees, and will to name a few.

# Daytime Prayer and the Eucharist

- Daytime prayer has a relation to the Eucharist.
- It can look back to a morning Eucharist as a reaffirmation of our dedication to God's will as expressed in the Mass, or it can look forward to and prepare for an evening Mass.

# The Importance of these “hours”

- In the course of our busy days, life can be very hectic. In the midst of our business we lose sight of why we are doing what we are doing. That is where this prayer is a good reminder: it is short, but helps to bring back the reality of what and why we are doing what we do.
- The beauty of this prayer is that it can be prayed in about 5 minutes.
- Again, realizing that this time is God’s gift to us so as to see how we are doing His will during our day and responding to the gift of TIME.
- It is a reminder that the Lord is the Lord of all time. It is this time that needs also to be made HOLY.

# VESPERS

- Vespers, from the Latin *vespera* meaning evening, signals the day's end and the beginning of night.
- It calls the us to quiet, peaceful reflection on the passing day and the sense of fulfillment derived from having done God's will.
- It also celebrates the lighting of the lamps, symbols of lives illuminated by faithfulness to God.



# Evening Prayer:

- This is the prayer that is best prayed at the end of the day: at dusk when the sun has run its course. Again, the prayer is to sanctify the day: it also runs in harmony with the natural world.
- Just as Morning Prayer has a theme of LIGHT for the light of the new day, Evening Prayer has a theme of thanksgiving as it reflects on the activity of the day that has passed.
- Just as the Evening Sacrifice was made at the Temple; so this “sacrifice of praise” is made in the Church.

# Evening Prayer

- Evening Prayer is a time to celebrate the “fullness” of revelation of Jesus.
- The evening recalls the evening of the Last Supper where Jesus showed the depths of his Love.
- The New Testament Canticles bring forth the theme of fulfillment that comprises Evening Prayer.
- Thus, Evening Prayer Sanctifies the closing of the day.

# COMPLINE: Night Prayer

- Compline, derived from the Latin word *completus*, meaning complete, serves to remind one of the day's fulfillment.
- Here the person's prayer is one of gratitude for the gifts of the day.
- It is also a prayer for God's protection throughout the night.

# Night Prayer

- This is the prayer to be prayed just before going to bed.
- Night prayer prepares us not only for sleep, but also for death.
- The structure and symbolism of this short prayer make it a powerful preparation.
- Examination of Conscience is done at the start.

# Into your Hands.....

- The theme of this prayer is to commend ourselves to the Lord: here we enter into His dying and raising.
- This is seen in the psalm choices, the antiphons and responses, as well as Simon's canticle.
- Traditionally, this hour ends with a prayer to Our Lady: Our life, our sweetness and our hope.

# Importance of Night Prayer

- It centers on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.
- Our sleeping can be likened to dying, and our rising from sleep is like our rising again.
- This is how the theme of night prayer is lived our lives.
- Night prayer sanctifies the final hour of the day. Yet, it also sanctifies our entire life which we place in the hands of the Lord.